

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-7, without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 8-22 remain as previously pending.

1.-7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Amended) A method of generating traction on a damaged limb of a patient that involves the steps of:

releasably affixing a traction-generating device to a backboard, said traction generating device comprising a proximal support member, a distal support member, and an axial support member; wherein the distal support member is substantially at the distal end of the traction-generating device;

placing a patient on the backboard;

adjusting a telescoping section of the traction-generating device to fit the patient;

locking the telescoping section of the traction-generating device at a desired length;

affixing a proximal support member to a limb region closer to the body relative to the damaged region of said limb;

affixing a distal support member to a limb region further from the body relative to the damaged region of said limb;

applying tension on said damaged limb by generating compressive forces within said telescoping section of said traction generating device; and

imaging the damaged limb while said traction generating device is still operably attached to the damaged limb of said patient.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein said imaging comprises acquisition of X-ray or fluoroscopic images or analysis.

10. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein said imaging comprises acquisition of magnetic resonance images or analysis.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the step of measuring the amount of said compressive forces in said axial support member.

12. (Previously Amended) An apparatus adapted for generating traction on a limb having a bone fracture, said apparatus comprising:

a backboard adapted to accommodate a patient and support a patient under a substantial portion of the patient's body and a substantial portion of the patient's limb;

a distal limb support member, said distal limb support member adapted to secure the limb at a point distal to the bone fracture, said distal support member being distally movable relative to the backboard;

means for fixing the distal support member in relation to the backboard and the limb;

a proximal support means for securing the patient to the traction generating apparatus at a point superior to the bone fracture; and

an axial support member for fixing the distal support member in relation to the proximal support means and generating compressive forces to move the distal support member away from the proximal support means;

wherein the proximal support means, the distal support member, and the axial support form a traction generating device that is releasably attached to the backboard such that the relationship between the proximal support means and the distal support means is fixed; and

wherein the distal support member is located substantially at the distal end of the traction-generating device.

13. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein the distal support member is adapted to secure the patient's foot in fixed relation to the backboard, and the proximal support means is adapted to secure the patient's chest or abdomen to the backboard.

14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein the distal support member is adapted to secure the patient's foot in fixed relation to the backboard, and the proximal support means is adapted to secure the patient's thigh to the backboard.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein all components are fabricated from non-magnetic materials.

16. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein all components are fabricated from radiolucent materials.

17. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein the means for fixing the distal support member in relation to the backboard and the limb comprises a telescoping splint and means for fixing the telescoping splint to the backboard.

18. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein the axial support member comprises a telescoping splint and means for releasably attaching the telescoping splint to the backboard.

19. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein the telescoping splint further comprises a controllable, lockable, articulating joint.

20. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein the axial support member further comprises an adjustable standoff to support the limb in the proper position.

21. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein the proximal support means comprises a friction pad affixed to a backboard and a strap to hold the torso and pelvis against the friction pad.

22. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the step of removing the traction generating device and patient from the backboard while maintaining traction on the damaged limb.